



## Prevention Treatment and Outreach NATIONAL GUARD

W E S T V I R G I N I A N A T I O N A L G U A R D

### April Is Alcohol Awareness Month

#### Alcohol Awareness Month

Take a  
**day off**  
from  
**drinking**  
this week.

healthfinder.gov

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Drinking too much alcohol can lead to health problems, including alcohol poisoning, hangovers, and an increased risk of heart disease. This April, during Alcohol Awareness Month, the Prevention, Treatment and Outreach Program encourages you to take this time to educate yourself and your loved ones about the dangers of alcohol abuse. In West Virginia alone, there have been 3,547 drunk driving accidents within the past year.



If you are drinking too much, you can improve your health by cutting back or quitting. Keep track of how much you drink, avoid places where overdrinking occurs, and find new ways to deal with stress. If you are concerned about someone else's drinking, offer to help.

For more information, contact the Prevention, Treatment and Outreach Office at 304-201-302 or TSgt Jessica Cunningham at 304-380-6495.

#### Warning Signs of Alcohol Abuse

If you answer "yes" to any of the following questions, you may have a problem with alcohol:

- Do you drink alone when you feel angry or sad?
- Does your drinking ever make you late for work?
- Does your drinking worry your family?
- Do you ever drink after telling yourself you won't?
- Do you ever forget what you did while drinking?
- Do you get headaches or have a hangover after drinking?

*"First you take a drink,  
then the drink takes a  
drink, then the drink takes  
you."*

*F. Scott Fitzgerald*

## HOW DOES ALCOHOL AFFECT US?

Almost all of us have heard that alcohol is a drug, but many of us don't think of the act of drinking alcohol as putting a drug into our bodies. It is important for people to understand that alcohol abuse impairs their judgment and their peripheral and central nervous system.

Alcohol also affects different people in different ways.

Some of the characteristics that determine the way alcohol affects you include:

- Gender
- Mood
- Body Weight
- Type of Alcohol
- Full/Empty Stomach
- Speed of Consumption
- Use of Medication or Other Drugs

But for most people, the effects of alcohol are determined by simple volume.

### How does impairment happen?

#### Let's take a look.

When a person drinks alcohol, it can enter the bloodstream as soon as you begin to drink. The molecular structure of alcohol (or ethanol) is small, so the alcohol can be absorbed or transferred into the blood through the mouth, the walls of the stomach, and the small intestine. *Continued on page 3*



## Alcohol Use by Young People

Adolescent alcohol use remains a pervasive problem. The percentage of teenagers who drink alcohol is slowly declining; however, numbers are still quite high. Forty percent of adolescents report drinking by 8th grade and 55% report being drunk at least once by 12th grade (Johnston et al., 2009).

### What Can Parents Do?

- Talk early and often, in developmentally appropriate ways with children and teens about your concerns, and theirs, regarding alcohol. Adolescents who know their parents' opinions about youth drinking are more likely to fall in line with their expectations.
- Establish policies early on, and be consistent in setting expectations and enforcing rules. Adolescents do feel that parents should have a say in decisions about drinking, and they maintain this deference to parental authority as long as they perceive the message to be legitimate; consistency is central to legitimacy.
- Work with other parents to monitor where kids are gathering and what they are doing. Being involved in the lives of adolescents is key to keeping them safe.
- Work in and with the community to promote dialogue about underage drinking and the creation and implementation of action steps to address it.
- Be aware of your State's laws about providing alcohol to your own children.
- Never provide alcohol to someone else's child.

Johnston, L.D.; O'Malley, P.M.; Bachman, J.G.; and Schulenberg, J.E. Monitoring the Future: National Results on Adolescent Drug Use: Overview of key findings, 2008 (NIH Publication No. 09-7401). Bethesda, MD: National Institute on Drug Abuse, 2009.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *The Surgeon General's Call to Action To Prevent and Reduce Underage Drinking: A Guide to Action for Families*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Surgeon General, 2007.

## THE NATIONAL SUICIDE PREVENTION LIFELINE 24-HOUR TOLL FREE SERVICE



The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is a 24 hour, toll free,

suicide prevention service available to anyone in the Military, National Guard, or Veteran with a suicidal crisis. If you need help, please dial **1-800-273-TALK (8255)**.

When prompted, press option **1** to connect to a VA staffed Crisis Center. Your call will be

routed to the nearest Crisis Center in your area or you may call 1-800-923-HELP.

The Youth Drug and Suicide Line is 1-877-553-TEEN.



## HOW DOES IT ALCOHOL AFFECT US CONT.

The stomach actually has a relatively slow absorption rate; it is the small intestine that absorbs most of the alcohol. That's why we want to keep the alcohol in the stomach as long as possible by eating food, which dilutes the alcohol and keeps it from entering the small intestine so quickly. Once alcohol gets into the bloodstream it moves through the body and comes into contact with virtually every organ. However, some of the highest concentrations, and certainly the

highest impact, are caused by the alcohol that reaches the brain.

We need to know that the body is quite efficient when it comes to dealing with alcohol. The liver is designed to metabolize the alcohol as we drink it. Enzymes break down the alcohol into harmless products and then it is excreted. However, the liver can only handle so much alcohol at a time. For a person of average weight and body type, the liver and small intestine can

handle alcohol at a rate of about one drink per hour.

If a person drinks at a faster rate than one drink per hour, the alcohol simply stays in the body, waiting its turn to be metabolized. Since there is more alcohol in the body than can be metabolized, the result is increasing levels of intoxication.

<http://www.bacchusgamma.org/alcohol-education.asp>

## STRATEGIES TO CUT BACK OR QUIT DRINKING

There are many strategies you can try to cut back or quit drinking. To get started:

1. Write your reasons for cutting down or stopping.
2. Set a Goal
3. Keep Track of your drinking. Keep a "diary" of your drinking.
4. Try to avoid places where heavy drinking occurs.
5. Ask for help from a doctor, family, or friends.
6. If you keep alcohol in your home, keep only a limited supply.
7. Take a break from alcohol.
8. Stay Active



## FREE FINANCIAL PLANNING

The Joint Family Support Assistance Program (JFSAP) has a Personal Financial Counselor (PFC) here in West Virginia ready to provide service members and families with professional, individualized financial planning and consultation services. All consultations are FREE AND CONFIDENTIAL.

The PFC is here to provide preventive education to enable service members and their families to make better decisions on topics, such as good financial practices, recognizing and avoiding financial traps and being knowledgeable of their rights and obligations as consumers.

Who can use it - Any service member, including National Guard, Reserve, Active or family members who may be interested in bolstering their financial readiness, productivity, and overall financial health.

What to expect - The Personal Financial Counselor will meet with you to help with issues such as budget development, financial planning, spending plan development, management of personal finances, and evaluation of assets and liabilities. In addition to these core activities, you can receive help with:

- ✦ Housing counseling (purchase, foreclosure prevention)
- ✦ Credit issues and maintaining good credit
- ✦ Debt management
- ✦ Financial related deployment issues
- ✦ Service members Civil Relief Act (SCRA)
- ✦ Payday loans, title loans, and rent to own
- ✦ Insurance
- ✦ Tax issues
- ✦ Basics of investing
- ✦ IRAs and mutual funds
- ✦ Retirement planning
- ✦ TSP/401(k)/403(b) questions

The Financial Counselor can help you with problem-solving and strategic planning related to investing and savings. For example, when discussing investment options, the counselor might discuss historical returns and volatility of different broad types of investments, such as bonds, stocks, mutual funds, or certificates of deposit (CDs). He can show how that information can help you make investment decisions appropriate to your financial goals, age, and tolerance for risk. The Financial Counselor provides objective information and does not recommend one investment over another.

This is a great opportunity to take advantage of a very valuable service provided to you free of charge.

Contact Mark Adolfson, JFSAP Financial Counselor for West Virginia at 304-400-9193 or email [WVfinancialcounselor@yahoo.com](mailto:WVfinancialcounselor@yahoo.com)

*Information you provide to counselors will be kept confidential, except to meet legal obligations or to prevent harm to self or others. Legal obligations include requirements of law and Dept of Defense or military regulations. Harm to self or others includes suicidal thought or intent, a desire to harm oneself, domestic violence, child abuse or neglect, violence against any person, and any present or future illegal activity.*

## HELPFUL RESOURCES

### CDC-ALCOHOL and PUBLIC HEALTH

<http://www.cdc.gov/alcohol/>

### TRICARE ALCOHOL AWARENESS

<http://www.tricare.mil/alcoholawareness/>

### THAT GUY!!

<http://thatguy.com>

### THE COOL SPOT

<http://thecoolspot.gov/>

### MITLITARY PATHWAYS

<http://www.militarymentalhealth.org/Welcome.aspx>

### HELPFUL RESOURCES

#### West Virginia Chaplains Chaplin

Reed, 561-6238

bruce.reed1@us.army.mil

Chaplin Coffey, 561-6490

gary.coffeey@us.army.mil

#### State Family Program

Director,

MAJ Martin

james.a.martin2@us.army.mil

#### Military Family Life

Consultant

tina.nibert@us.army.mil

#### Treatment Locator (SAMHSA)

dasis3.samhsa.gov

#### Military One Source

www.militaryonesource.com

#### Veterans' Affairs

www.va.gov

### Test Your Alcohol Knowledge

1. Alcohol is a central nervous system stimulant. **T or F**
2. Alcohol and aspirin taken together raises Blood Alcohol Levels. **T or F**
3. Alcohol abuse and alcohol dependence are different problems. **T or F**
4. A large quantity of alcohol affects respiration and heart rate. **T or F**
5. An average mixed drink contains nearly twice as much alcohol as a 12-oz. beer. **T or F**
6. Everyone eliminates alcohol from their body at the same rate. **T or F**
7. A glass of wine is absorbed into the bloodstream faster than a "gin and tonic." **T or F**
8. Drinking coffee will help you "sober up." **T or F**
9. Vomiting is part of the body's defense against alcohol poisoning. **T or F**

*Answers on Page 6*

## Contact Info

### PTO

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Prevention Coordinator – ARMY/AIR  
304-201-3102  
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### Testing

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Substance Abuse Program Coordinator  
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Substance Abuse Program Coordinator  
304-201-3102  
christina.n.hammack@us.army.mil

## Our Mission

*To provide prevention training, outreach to military families, and treatment resources to service members in an effort to increase military discipline, individual performance, and combat readiness*

## LIMITED USE POLICY

*If you or someone you know is abusing alcohol or drugs, it is best to admit the concern to your chain of command so they can help before you get caught. If you admit your abuse and request help, you may be protected from any adverse action taken against you.*

*Self-referrals are protected under AR600-85. You should contact your chain of command or the PTO (304-201-3102) office for assistance.*

## Answers to Test Your Knowledge on page 5

1. F    2. F    3. T    4. T    5. F    6. F    7. F    8. F    9. T